

MINUTES OF THE NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

JULY 21, 2004
UPPER BIG BLUE NRD OFFICE
YORK, NE

Those in attendance were:

Beverly Donaldson, Chair
Vince Kramper, Member
Richard Jiskra, Member
Joseph Hergott, Member
Dan Watermeier, Member
Garry Anderson, Member
Jim Van Marter, Member
Wayne Madsen, Member
LeRoy Pieper, Member
Richard Hadenfeldt, Member
Wayne Davis, Member

Don Roberts, Member
Clinton Johannes, Member
John Turnbull
Lyndon Vogt
Roger Patterson, Director
Steve Gaul, Staff
Rich Kern, Staff
Tom Pesek, Staff
Gayle Starr Staff

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Beverly Donaldson, in the meeting room of the Upper Big Blue NRD in York, Nebraska, at approximately 8:00 a.m.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was placed in the LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR and the YORK NEWS-TIMES notifying the public of the meeting.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

The following items of informational material were distributed during the course of the meeting and a copy of each is attached to the file copy of the minutes.

1. Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund – Inventory of Fee Title Lands.
2. Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund – Projected Funding Requests.
3. Status of Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.
4. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status.
5. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Quarterly Report.
6. Water Well Decommissioning Fund Status Report.
7. Natural Resources Water Quality Fund.
8. Soil & Water Conservation Fund, Expenditures by Month 1996-2004.
9. Soil & Water Conservation Fund Report – Republican Basin Water Meter Program.
10. Expenditures for May & June 2004.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Watermeier to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2004, Commission meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

Aye: Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Van Marter, Madsen, Kramper, Pieper, Roberts, Davis, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Donaldson,

Nay: None

Not Present: Korell, Rexroth, Garratt

EXPENDITURES

It was noted that the expenditure report for May and June, 2004, had been distributed for Commission members.

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

LeRoy Stokes, representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, commented on the Conservation Security Program and the NRCS efforts to assist with the water supply situation in the Pumpkin Creek drainage area in the North Platte NRD.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Roger Patterson indicated that he and other staff members have been spending a considerable amount of time working with the NRDs and others in the Republican Basin to meet the terms of the settlement. He added that the staff is working with other state and federal agencies in developing a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program application that would include the Republican and Platte River Basins. He noted that this program would provide payments to surface water or ground water irrigators to not irrigate under a 10 or 15 year contract. He noted that this program is administered by the Farm Services Agency of USDA and would require some non-federal matching funds from either the state or local governmental units.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Vince Kramper noted that the next meeting of the Environmental Trust Board is July 29 in Holdrege. He added that the Environmental Trust staff has moved into the Ferguson mansion near the Capitol building.

WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

Roger Patterson noted that the staff is working on the necessary steps to implement the various provisions of LB 962. He added that a proposed budget for the use of the \$2.5 million dollars

appropriated for this purpose is being developed and that the Executive Committee of the Water Policy Task Force would be meeting in the near future to review that budget. He also noted that Senator Schrock would like to have a meeting of the full Water Policy Task Force in the next few months.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Dan Watermeier called on Tom Pesek who reviewed the Resources Development Fund status report and the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund status report. Pesek also explained the process of establishing a Revolving Fund base for FY 2005 and recommended the Commission establish that revolving fund base at one million dollars. Motion was made by Jiskra and seconded by Kramper to establish a revolving fund base of one million dollars for the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund for FY 2005. Motion carried.

Aye: Jiskra, Watermeier, Van Marter, Madsen, Kramper, Pieper, Roberts, Davis, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Hergott, Donaldson

Nay: None

Not Present: Korell, Rexroth, Garratt

Pesek also noted that Commission members had been provided a copy of a letter from the Director to the Lower Elkhorn NRD

containing questions concerning the Leigh Dam project application/feasibility report, as well as letters from the Department of Roads, Game & Parks Commission and Department of Environmental Quality concerning issues that those agencies had raised concerning that project.

Gayle Starr distributed the status reports concerning the Soil & Water Conservation fund, Natural Resources Water Quality Fund, and Water Well Decommissioning Fund and briefly reviewed them. He also noted that the department had received approval from the Bureau of Reclamation for a \$100,000 federal funds grant for cost-share on water meters in the South Platte NRD. He noted that the authority for cost-sharing on meters was through the Soil & Water Conservation Fund and recommended that the Commission approve this program with a 50 percent cost-share rate and a cost-share limit of \$800 per meter, including installation. Motion was made by Davis and seconded by Kramper to approve the use of the Soil & Water Conservation Fund for a water meter cost-share program in the South Platte NRD utilizing federal funds from the Bureau of Reclamation with the cost-share rate being 50 percent with a maximum cost-share amount of \$800 per meter including installation. Motion carried.

Aye: Watermeier, Van Marter, Madsen, Kramper, Pieper, Roberts, Davis, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Hergott, Jiskra, Donaldson

Nay: None

Not Present: Korell, Rexroth, Garratt

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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Steve Gaul noted that Commission members had been provided a copy of the Annual Report for the Planning and Review Process. He said that this was a draft copy and a final copy needs to be

submitted by September 15, and noted that Commission members could make comments on the report. There were several questions and one suggestion to include a glossary of the various acronyms included within the report.

Gaul then introduced Rich Kern who provided a presentation on the Nebraska Rainfall Assessment and Information Network program that has been recently initiated by NRDs in about two-thirds of the state with the department maintaining the information on an internet site. Kern provided a demonstration of the information available on the Internet site and responded to a number of questions concerning the program.

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be on September 28, 2004, at the Kearney Holiday Inn Hotel and Convention Center in connection with the NARD annual conference.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 AM.

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Chairman

Director of Natural Resources